

## Historic District Review Committee

### Staff Report September 14, 2009

#### Action Item

**CAPP 2009-0009 Bluemont Community Center: Renovation and Rear Addition in the Bluemont Historic District (deferred from July 13 meeting). MCPI 632-15-4042.**

#### Background

On Monday, July 13, 2009, the Loudoun County Historic District Review Committee (HDRC) deferred Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0009 as submitted in the application dated June 11, 2009 and revised July 7, 2009. The HDRC requested the following for review at a later meeting:

1. A cladding material proposal for the addition, either cementitious (real) stucco or cementitious clapboard siding.
2. Several treatment options for the two-story hyphen between the historic school and the addition,
3. A sample of the proposed imitation stone,

In response, the applicant submitted proposed changes to the application on Thursday, August 20, 2009.

This staff report provides the analysis of the proposed changes, as well as revised findings and conditions. It also includes the findings and conditions still relevant from the initial submission.

#### Analysis

##### Wall Cladding

The applicant proposes to side the new addition with cementitious clapboard siding with a 6" reveal and a smooth finish. The Statement of Justification (SOJ) notes that this material was chosen for budgetary reasons. It also notes that the Guidelines recognize clapboard as the predominant wall cladding in Bluemont (*ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Introduction, Text, pg. 119*). If the HDRC decides that real stucco is the preferred material, then the applicant will reevaluate the cost and attempt to manage the budget in a manner that may make stucco affordable.

The *ABOT Guidelines* state that modern substitutes compatible with historic materials may be acceptable if the substitute material replicates the visual qualities and workability of the original material. The proposed cementitious clapboard with a smooth finish and a 6" reveal is an acceptable substitute material (*ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Materials and Textures, Guidelines 8 and 10, pg. 80*). Differentiating the new addition from the historic building by using a different, but

compatible siding type also meets these Guidelines (*ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Materials and Details, Guideline 1, pg. 88*).

Staff notes that real stucco that matches the appearance of the existing historic stucco also meets the Guidelines since the hyphen also differentiates the old and new parts of the building. A professional plasterer should be hired to apply the stucco if this option is pursued (*ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Stucco, Guidelines 4 and 8, pg. 131*).

### Two-Story Hyphen

The applicant has proposed four designs for the hyphen or link between the historic Bluemont School and the new addition.

#### *Option 1a: Masonry at Hyphen*

This option draws on the precedent of using different materials for additions to historic buildings in the County. The hyphen would be clad with stone matching the foundation on the existing school and the new addition. The windows would match the windows in the existing building and the new addition.

The ratio of solids to voids created by the use of matching windows meets the Guidelines. Differentiating the addition is recommended, as is the use of materials compatible with the existing building (*ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Design, Guidelines 3 and 4, pg. 86; Materials and Details, Guideline 1, pg. 88*). However, the use of stone would evoke an evolution of building construction that is not historically accurate to this early twentieth century school. In Bluemont, only very early buildings are stone (*ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Introduction, Text, pg. 119*). In general, stone was used for very early small dwellings or later, more substantial residences in the County, and not for a small portion, such as the hyphen, of a larger building.

#### *Option 1b: Siding at Hyphen*

The second option uses clapboard, the predominant siding type in Bluemont on both the hyphen and the addition. In this option, the windows would also match the windows in the existing building and the new addition.

The ratio of solids to voids created by the use of matching windows meets the Guidelines. However, differentiating the hyphen and proposed addition from the existing building as recommended in the Guidelines is only minimally achieved because the materials are the same for both parts of the addition (*ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Design, Guidelines 3 and 4, pg. 86; Materials and Details, Guideline 1, pg. 88*).

#### *Option 2: Glass at Hyphen*

The third option is to construct a glass curtainwall between the existing building and the new addition. The windows will align with the fenestration on the historic building and new addition to create a visual link between all three sections.

The glass curtainwall creates an obvious delineation between the historic building and the new addition. It would do so whether the new addition was clad with cementitious clapboard or stucco. The modern materials and design of the hyphen clearly convey the old and new parts of the building to the public. While modern, the glass curtainwall is not a radical departure from the original design (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Design, Guidelines 3 and 4, pg. 86; Materials and Details, Guideline 1, pg. 88).

#### *Option 3: Wood Screen*

The final option is to construct a vertical wood screen over the glass curtainwall. This option is a variation of the initial proposal to the HDRC. As noted in the previous submission, the Cambia wood slats of the screen relate to Cambia wood sections in the patio.

This option also clearly differentiates the old and new sections of the building and uses materials compatible with the historic building. However, the relationship of materials and visual connection is to the new patio, and not the historic building. The use of the wood screen in addition to the glass curtainwall is a very contemporary solution and could be considered a radical departure from the original design (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Design, Guidelines 3 and 4, pg. 86; Materials and Details, Guideline 1, pg. 88).

Staff finds that *Option 2: Glass at Hyphen* is the most successful at meeting the Guidelines for Additions and recommends it for approval.

#### Stone Foundation and Details

Originally, the applicant proposed an imitation stone veneer for the addition foundation and the patio retaining wall. The applicant now proposes real stone that will match the foundation of the existing school. The mortar will also match the existing in color, texture, strength, and appearance. This proposal meets the Guidelines (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Stone and Brick, Guideline 2, pg. 129).

#### **Findings**

1. Rehabilitating the exterior of the existing historic building by patching stucco, painting the building with a similar color scheme, refurbishing the windows, and replacing exterior storm windows with interior storm windows meets the ABOT Guidelines.
2. The proposed addition is on the rear of the Bluemont Community Center and not visible from the public way, maintaining the original setting and orientation of the historic building.
3. The proposed addition is subordinate to and differentiated from the historic building, while the design maintains a similar roof form and pitch, foundation height, and relationship between solids and voids, meeting the historic district guidelines.

4. The materials, details, and colors for the proposed wall cladding, foundation, windows, doors, roof, portico, gutters and downspouts, and cornice and overhang are compatible with the existing building and meet the ABOT Guidelines.
5. The narrow hyphen prevents a large amount of materials from being removed from the historic building.
6. The glass curtainwall hyphen option (Option 2) best meets the Guidelines for Additions.
7. Siting the patio and accessible ramp to the rear of the historic building is an appropriate location for these new outdoor elements.
8. Patio materials, concrete, stone facing and capping, are compatible with the historic building as well as the new addition.
9. The Cambia patio "decking" decreases the impact to the historic building while differentiating the existing building from the new addition and patio. The rear section easily allows for possible changes to the building in the future.
10. Adding a minimal amount of gravel parking spaces on one side of the building and two paved accessible parking spaces to the other side meets the recommendations for parking areas.
11. LEED Certification is consistent with the Green Guidelines for New Construction in Historic Districts.

## **Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

## **Conditions**

Staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Repair or replacement of existing windows follows the Guidelines for Windows.
2. If real stucco is used it should match the existing stucco in appearance. A professional plasterer should be hired to apply the stucco.

## **Suggested Motions**

1. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0009 for the proposed renovation and addition to the Bluemont Community Center, 33846 Snickersville Turnpike, in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands, and Taylorstown Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the following findings (see findings above)....and the following conditions....*
2. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0009 for the proposed renovation and addition to the Bluemont Community Center, 33846 Snickersville Turnpike, in accordance with*

*the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands, and Taylorstown Historic and Cultural Conservation Districts based on the following findings...(see findings above).*

3. *I move alternate motion...*